

COMPETE PROJECT

Strengthening the competitiveness and export potential of key sectors essential to the future prosperity of the Palestinian economy

Weekly report: July 22-26

Submitted by DAI to USAID, West Bank Gaza
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AGRIBUSINESS SECTOR

ACTIVITIES & PROJECT INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

- The increasing salinity of the artesian water wells in the Jordan Valley has adverse affects on productivity and quality of crops. A potentially viable treatment, COMPETE will begin testing a **Saline Water technology** implemented by a COMPETE agronomist, technical team and Geology-Hydrology Doctor from Al-Quds University. A recent visit revealed that primary results on the four sites showed average water EC (Electron Conductivity) of ~2.60; optimum EC level is ~1.50. Once applied, a magnetic field will help to restructure the water molecules and subsequently maximize healthy hydration of the plant passageways.

Intermediate result contributed to: Linking Local Value Chain to International Value Chain

- Key agribusiness objective is **Upgrading Nurseries Facilities** to produce certified high-quality seedling at reasonable prices. First GLOBALGAP assessment has been conducted on Al-Juneidy Nursery in the governorate of Nablus. Assessment highlighted many needs, including infrastructure rehabilitations, new sowing and line production equipment and staff training. Three facilities are slated to be assessed and upgraded through grafting knowledge-transfer and cost-sharing.
- To improve firms' facilities to produce high quality produce, COMPETE is working to upgrade **Meat & Dairy Facilities**. Lab equipment has been identified and RFQ launched; next step is for COMPETE to finalize contracts for immediate implementation.

Intermediate result contributed to: # of Palestinian Products & Services Meeting International Standards or Specifications

Forecast for next week

- Various site visits
- Planning for August association building legal workshop

Milestones:

- First GLOBALGAP assessment conducted.
- Four sites identified for Saline Water Demos.
- Finalizing legal status for organizing Fresh Herbs sector.
- Identified Lab equipment & RFQ have been launched for Upgrading of Meat and Dairy Facilities.
- Signed GAP analysis contract with consultant for Upgrading Accredited Laboratory for Fresh Produce Analysis.
- Signed Contract with specialized consultants for IMP/GAP analysis for Upgrading Fresh Herbs Facilities.



Saline Water Technology site visit, Jordan Valley, July 24, 2012



Al Juneidy Nursery, Nablus, July 23, 2012

TOURISM SECTOR

- Progress on the **Bethlehem Signage Project** includes meeting with Municipalities, who indicated full support.
 - Meeting of the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce & Industry regarding the implementation of the Signage activity also occurred this week; draft implementation plan was agreed upon.
 - BCCI is currently completing the necessary paper work (financial capabilities, grant proposal etc.) Further meetings are planned with BCCI to assist in preparing the proposal and detailed action plan.

Intermediate result contributed to: Linking Local Value Chain to International Value Chain

- As part of the **Hotel Classification Model Review**, a database of all hotels and guest-houses is being finalized, in addition to a work-plan developed with local and Jordanian experts.
 - Meeting with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities Head of Planning confirmed way forward with Hotel Classification model.
 - The team nominated three members to the Hotel Classification Working Group
- Introductory meeting of the **Hotel Classification taskforce** occurred on July 26th (next meeting scheduled for end of August.) Representatives of both public and private sectors attended the meeting with 4 MOTA directors, and Tourism Police, AHA President and three members, HLITOA representative and the associations' director. Agreement to move forward with the Hotel Classification System in addition to following next steps:
 - Instructions to amend the Licensing where AHA membership becomes mandatory
 - Establishing a Joint Hotel Classification committee made up of 3 AH , 4 MOTA , 1HILTO, 1 Educational Institute plus experts as needed
 - Letter of commitment and intent from MOTA and AHA to be exchanged
 - COMPETE along with its experts to prepare TOR for the joint committee, training and awareness programs under the supervision of the committee, and to present in the coming meeting the proposed Palestinian Quality standards as amended and fit after reviewing the Jordanian model.
 - AHA and MOTA to start nominating and screening candidates for assessors training and staffing.
- Joint collaboration meeting undertaken with Department of Antiquities on Site Renovation and Rehabilitation on Tuesday July 24th
 - Agreement on the establishment of a Site Renovation and Rehabilitation Taskforce group, to be conducted under the Working Group was agreed between Department of Antiquities, USAID and Compete.
- Introductory meeting of the **Site Renovation and Rehabilitation Taskforce** occurred on July 26th

Intermediate result contributed to: # of Palestinian Products & Services Meeting International Standards or Specifications

Forecast for next week

- Planning underway for Taskforce Group familiarization of 5 priority sites
- Continued planning for the Digital Tourism conference (i.e. content, speaker identification, materials)

Milestones:

- Draft assessment report for Hospitality School
- Arrival of international consultant (Hospitality School)
- Completed a draft database of hotels, hostels and guesthouse
- Completed necessary paper work for Bethlehem Signage Project
- Two draft SOWs developed for The Digital Tourism activity
- First Taskforce meeting for Site Renovation undertaken following prioritization of 5 sites for short term interventions

ICT SECTOR

ACTIVITIES & PROJECT INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

- Compete is helping establish a PDF development unit at Proginer company in Ramallah through a \$100,000 grant. The project aims at supporting Proginer efforts to build capacity and skills necessary to command more of PDF development business which is currently developed in India. Over 3 years Proginer forecasts to increase its size of PDFs current R&D budget from 9% to 25% which leads to a major increase in the size of employment and exports in the Palestinian territories. PDF is a US based company that develops software for the semi-conductor business and has a \$14 million USD R&D budget. Furthermore; Proginer will offer internships to several Palestinian students and graduates on annual basis to learn more of this unique technology and engage local universities to change the current IT curriculum taught at Palestinian Universities.

Intermediate result contributed to: Linking Local Value Chain to International Value Chain

- [Compete has joined forces with Infinite Tiers Group Inc](#), to establish an Apple IOS Excellence center in Nablus, north of West Bank. Infinite Tiers will receive a grant of \$99,000 to build an IOS training Center that will serve a huge base of students, entrepreneurs and IT graduates to learn best methodologies on how to build mobile software and games on Apple platform, one of the fastest growing businesses in the world. This important development project aims at creating a pool of Palestinian resources expert in mobile technologies and at the same time collaboratively work with local universities to alter the IT curriculum to include such topics. The IOS resource center will give selected interns and students hands-on experience in the mobile gaming technologies. Infinite Tiers was established in 2001 to provide software services and products to the world's leading organizations with the majority of their clients are fortune 100 companies.

Intermediate result contributed to: # of Palestinian Products & Services Meeting International Standards or Specifications

- In coordination with PITA, COMPETE is planning a [Nano MBA course](#) for Palestinian GMs and CEOs, on the topics of Management, Strategy, Marketing and International Business Lahave is the Executive Education company in Tel Aviv University that runs many programs such as the Kellogg-North Western EMBA program. The offer has been received and COMPETE is gathering feedback from PITA and the community.

Intermediate result contributed to: Categories for Skilled Workforce to Increase Demand

Forecast for next week

- Planning for 2nd Ramallah Connect event, September 30th (TBC)

- Nano MBA course preparations, meetings

Milestones:

- Started vetting process for Oracle Training initiative
- Finished concept paper for Ramallah Connect Event
- Finished vetting process for Progeneer grant
- Finished vetting process for Infinite Tiers

STONE & MARBLE SECTOR

ACTIVITIES & PROJECT INTERMEDIATE RESULTS

- COMPETE attended a meeting with the **Union of Stone and Marble**, Bethlehem, along with representatives from the Quartet Office and a consortium of 6 companies.
 - Items discussed included activities to support the sector and collaborative efforts for upcoming trade shows (e.g. Marmomacc)

Intermediate result contributed to: Linking Local Value Chain to International Value Chain

- Work around **CIBER assessment** (expected completion in August) continues, including meeting with local CIBER teams to disseminate work and financial modeling.

Intermediate result contributed to: Categories for Skilled Workforce to Increase Demand

Forecast for next week:

- Continued work on Marmomacc Trade Fair
- Presentation for USAID

Milestones:

- Identified sector challenges
- Gathered data regarding sludge in Hebron
- Submitted action memo for “Filter Press Evaluation and Maintenance”

Calendar of Events – July 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
		CIBER workshop, Jericho (Fresh Produce)				
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	CIBER workshop, Hebron, 40+ participants	Fresh herbs association building workshop, Ramallah	Final Tourism CIBER Assessment TBC	(start of Ramadan)		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	(EID)			Hotel Classification Working Meeting, Bethlehem		
29	30	31				
			<p>August:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hotel Classification Workgroup Meeting (Aug 15th) CIBER Workshop, Jericho, stakeholders of the fresh Produce Industry and service providers. “Cost benefit Analysis” to the top 4 to 5 priority impediments. (TBC, Aug 25th) Workshop, Ramallah, association building and the legal environment: “other legal options” (date TBC) <p>September:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Tourism event Ramallah ICT CONNECT event(s) (TBC, Sept 5th) Oracle Training Launch, (TBC, Sept 15th) 			